Amendments to the Claims

IN THE CLAIMS:

Withdraw from further prosecution in this application, claims 15-18.

1. (Original) An extrusion system for continuously extruding molten material to form a tubular structure having a predetermined cross-section size and uniform wall gauge concentricity, said apparatus comprising an extrusion housing having a tapered interior wall surface; an extruder die head releasably connected to said housing; an introduction port in said housing for introducing said molten material into the interior of said housing; a fixed center die module configured to slidably mate with the tapered interior wall surface of said housing; and means for securing said fixed center die module in said housing.

2. (Original) The extrusion apparatus of claim 1, wherein said housing further comprises at least one controllable temperature zone.

3. (Original) The extrusion apparatus of claim 1 wherein said housing comprises dual controllable temperature zones in the front part of the housing.

4. (Original) The extrusion apparatus of claim 1, wherein said fixed center die module is configured such that molten material introduced into said housing is divided into four parts providing balanced flow of said molten material to said extruder die head.

5. (Original) The extrusion apparatus of claim 1, wherein said fixed center die module comprises a tubular member having a uniform inner circumference along its longitudinal axis and a plurality of raised surfaces extending from and integral with the outer circumference of said tubular member, said plurality of raised surfaces exhibiting a frusto-conical configuration along said longitudinal axis and providing a plurality of passages between said plurality of raised surfaces

such that said molten material is divided into equal parts during extrusion.

6. (Original) The extrusion apparatus of claim 5, wherein said fixed center die module is configured such that molten material is divided into two equal parts and the two equal parts are subsequently divided into four equal parts.

7. (Original) The extrusion apparatus of claim 1, wherein said apparatus is a crosshead extrusion apparatus.

8. (Original) The extrusion apparatus of claim 1, wherein said tubular structure is useful as a high pressure hose.

9. (Original) The extrusion apparatus of claim 8, wherein said tubular structure is useful as a power steering hose.

10. (Original) The extrusion apparatus of claim 9, wherein said tubular structure is covered with a reinforcing layer.

11. (Original) The extrusion apparatus of claim 10, wherein said reinforcing layer is braided or spiral constructed fiber.

12. (Original) The extrusion apparatus of claim 11, wherein said braided or spiral constructed fabric is selected from the group consisting of glass fiber, polyester fiber, polyamide fiber and partially acetyl-formed polyvinyl alcohol fiber.

13. (Original) The extrusion apparatus of claim 1, wherein said molten material is vulcanized or unvulcanized rubber.

14. (Original) The extrusion apparatus of claim 1, wherein the configuration of said fixed center

die module precludes the need for continuous die adjustment to achieve predetermined cross-section and uniform wall gauge of said extruded tubular structure.

15 - 18 (Withdrawn)

19. (Original) In an extrusion apparatus for continuously extruding molten plastic or rubber material to form a tubular structure comprising an extrusion housing and an extrusion die assembly, the improvement comprising employing in the interior of said extrusion housing, a fixed center die module comprising a tubular member having a uniform inner circumference along its longitudinal axis and a plurality of raised surfaces extending from and integral with the outer circumference of said tubular member, said plurality of raised surfaces exhibiting a frusto-conical configuration along said longitudinal axis and providing a plurality of passages between said plurality of raised surfaces such that said molten material is divided into two equal parts and the two equal parts are subsequently divided into four equal parts providing balanced flow of said molten material to an extrusion die head to form a tubular structure having a predetermined cross-section and uniform wall gauge concentricity, wherein the configuration of said fixed center die module precludes the need for continuous die adjustment to achieve predetermined cross-section size and uniform wall gauge of said extruded tubular structure.